

Utah County Employee of the Month, February 2012  
Jennifer Hatfield - Public Health Nurse II  
Health Department

Jennifer started working for the Utah County Health Department in 2003 in school nursing and the STD clinic. In 2004 she started working for the Welcome Baby program as a home visitation nurse. Prior to working at the Health Department she worked in the NICU at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center.

Jennifer is an excellent employee and goes the extra mile to help the families she visits. She has been known to stay late or come in on days she was not scheduled to work to make sure everything was completed. The following story is one example of her dedication. Jennifer received a new referral for a family that needed a home visit. She was quite concerned about the situation. She was unable to contact the mom by phone and knew she would have to drop by the home and hope that the mother and baby were there. The only time she had to do this was late in the day, after she had completed her other home visits. At the home she found the mother very distressed and unable to care for the baby. Jennifer knew the family needed help beyond her abilities. She knew that when a referral is made to DCFS chances are very slim that the nurse will be invited back into the home. Weighing that decision carefully, she contacted DCFS, the local police department and some family members to help care for the baby. She also called her family and told them she would be home late—again. Because of Jennifer's decision and genuine concern for the welfare of the baby, the family received the needed help and continued receiving home visits.

Jennifer is patient with new moms and uses creative ways to contact them even when it is difficult. One mother lived up Spanish Fork Canyon where there was no phone service. She was having a difficult time contacting the mother. After some investigating she discovered that the mother took her children to school in Spanish Fork and when she was at the school the mom had cell phone coverage. Jennifer called the mother in the morning, just before school started and was able to make contact. She made arrangements for a home visit and was able to continue visits for several months.

Jennifer has excellent teaching and clinical skills. She reinforces learning with new parents by demonstrating an activity and then having the parents repeat what has been shown. Her background as a NICU nurse has served her well with teaching students and helping families with premature infants. One mother had difficulty with her baby breast feeding and gaining weight. She suffered severe pain while breastfeeding and considered it normal. After observing the baby breast feed, Jennifer encouraged the mother to see the doctor and ask about a possible yeast infection. The doctor confirmed Jennifer's observations. Another mother was having a difficult time getting her baby to breast feed. The mother reported the baby didn't seem to be hungry or interested when she tried to feed him. The doctor was concerned about weight gain and the mother was stressed thinking she couldn't provide adequately for her baby. Jennifer took the time to teach her about hunger cues and on-demand feeding. These

suggestions helped the mother gain confidence and relax which made breastfeeding more successful and resulted in an appropriate weight gain.

Jennifer goes the extra mile to help her clients access the necessary resources. She has waited on hold on the phone for great lengths of time to get information for her clients. She also is very helpful transitioning clients to early intervention or other services by rearranging her schedule so she can attend the evaluations. Jennifer also goes the extra mile to help mothers with Post Partum Depression. She plans her visits to meet their individual needs and encourages them to attend the Post Partum Depression support group here at the Health Department.

A coworker wrote, "I appreciate how Jennifer happily offers her knowledge and mental database of resources with me! There are many instances where she has gone the extra mile to provide exceptional service to clients! Currently, she is visiting with parents that moved to Utah County from India. While living in Utah, these parents had their first baby. The baby was born with a rare genetic disorder. One of the characteristics of this disorder is unusual, rapid breathing. The family has experienced great anxiety with this baby as it is their first child, he needs special care, and they have no family in the United States. Jennifer also learned the family, particularly the mother of the baby, felt very isolated and alone. When Jennifer first contacted the family, they were skeptical to receive help from a stranger. Jennifer worked intensely to change their reluctance into trust as she made special efforts to research more about their baby's genetic condition and also showed genuine concern for this family. She has made numerous phone calls and multiple visits with this family in their home to provide resources, referrals, and specific activities to help this child develop and grow. Jennifer improved the life of this family in so many ways including finding hope in despair, strengthening connections with their community, advocating for the child, & encouraging a good relationship with physicians, specialists, and other early intervention agencies. Through this and her everyday example, Jennifer shows the delicate and complex work involved in helping infants and their families in times of crisis and growth. She inspires all around her to do better and make a difference in the lives of those we work with!"

Jennifer is the first to notice if someone is having a bad day and will try to do something to make them feel better. Even if she is running out the door she is willing to lend a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on. On a blustery day last winter, she came in from making home visits, put her things down at her cubicle and was observed making a cup of hot chocolate. Then she disappeared. Later her coworkers found out that the cup of hot chocolate was not for her but for someone she saw outside in the cold.

Jennifer serves her family and friends with the same passion she has for her clients and coworkers. She is a devoted wife and mother of three boys. She also helps care for her mother and many nieces and nephews. She recently moved to a small farm where she helps with dogs, horses, cows, chickens, and an occasional bummer lamb that relies on her nursing expertise. Jennifer is not a farmer by choice but is not afraid to jump in and get her hands dirty with the farm work or a sick animal. Recently her son's dog was injured in a car accident. By the time she received the news a Good Samaritan saw her

son and dog by the side of the road and took them to a local veterinarian. When Jennifer got the news of the accident the vet bill was over \$1,000. Unlike the Biblical Good Samaritan there was no provision for payment of services. The dog was brought home with a broken hip and strict instruction that he should not be active. With her son's loving care and Jennifer's skills, expertise and guidance the dog was able to recover.

Jennifer is an example of the wonderful employees we have at Utah County Health Department and we are honored to nominate her as an Employee of the Month.

Nominated by Marla Raff